Notes on the Sãsī Dialect.—*By* Rev. T. Grahame Bailey, B.D., M.A., *Wazīrābād.*

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'Sãsī' is the name given by Panjābīs to one of the criminal tribes of the Panjāb. The Sãsīs are a deeply interesting people. Sunk low in the scale of civilisation, addicted by nature and education to criminal habits, clinging to traditional beliefs peculiarly their own, living in the midst of, yet holding aloof from, other races, they invite the attention of students of ethnology and students of comparative religion alike. But their linguistic interest is paramount. Being criminals they conceal their language with scrupulous and extraordinary care. Many are the stories they tell of Panjābīs and Europeans, who attempting to become conversant with their speech, relinquished the project in despair, being baffled at the unforeseen magnitude of the task they had undertaken. Such stories are, needless to say, exaggerations.

The Sãsī Dialect may be subdivided into two, the main dialect, and the criminal variation. While the former will certainly repay time spent on it by students of language, the chief interest lies undoubtedly in the latter. Here we have the remarkable phenomenon of a dialect which owes its origin to deliberate fabrication for the purpose of aiding and abetting crime. Sãsīs themselves are unaware of its source; yet in the presence of strangers they unconsciously use a dialect which is not a natural growth but a conscious manufacture. So much has this become new part of themselves that Sãsīs from any district in the Panjāb will speak the same dialect and be ignorant of the fact that what they call this language is originally a conscious imposture, a deliberate fraud, a carefully laid plot to keep in natural darkness deeds which would not bear the light.

The main dialect is used by all Sãsīs, both children and adults, in ordinary conversation. It closely resembles Panjābī, though sometimes more like Urdū, and if spoken with a clear and deliberate enunciation, might be partially understood by a Panjābī. The criminal variation is absolutely unintelligible except to the initiated. Even

Sāsī children understand it very imperfectly. It is used in speaking in the presence of aliens. In the grammatical notes below I have indicated words belonging to this variation by the word 'criminal' in parentheses. The fact, above alluded to, that the Sāsī dialect resembles, sometimes Panjābī and sometimes Urdū, is worthy of attention. The 1st and 2nd pers. pron. give a good example of this. The singular is closely allied to Panjābī, but the plural is even more closely allied to Urdū. All Sāsīs can speak Panjābī, but do so with an accent and intonation peculiar to themselves.

Main Dialect.

Pronunciation: Vowel sounds are the same as in Panjābī. Consonants vary only in so far as they extend the use of the gutturally pronounced aspirates. In Panjābī initial bh, gh, jh, dh, ḍh, have a pronunciation entirely distinct from that which they receive in Urdū. In Sāsī we find in addition to these mh and nh, cf. mhārā = hamārā, and nhārā = sārā (criminal), *cf.* Panjābī nhērnī. This peculiar guttural sound is traceable, as in Panjābī, in vowels, but here no rule can be laid down. Experience alone will bring accuracy.

Grammar, greatly resembles Panjābī and Urdū.

Noun, Scheme of Declension.

		Singular.	*Plural.*
Masc. nouns in—ā	Nom. Oblique Agent	—ā —ē —ē̃	—ē —ē̃ —ē̃ ōrõ

		Singular.	*Plural.*
Masc. nouns in —ī, —ū and ending in consonant, and all Fem. nouns add the following endings.	Nom. Oblique Agent	 —ā —ē̃	Masc. same as Sing. Fem. —ā̃ —ē̃ —ē̃ ōrõ

Thus, bhūkal, dog (criminal), kūtā, dog (ordinary, *cf.* kuttā).

Gen. bhūkalā —gā, —gē, —gī, —gīā̃. } = { kuttē kā kē kī (Sing.)
kūtē —gā, „ „ „ } { kī, pl. Urdū.

Dat. bhūkalā } gŭ = kuttē kō.
kūtē }

Abl. bhūkalā, kūtē thõ = kuttē sē.

Loc. bhūkalā, kūtē bich = kuttē mẽ.

Ag. bhūkalē̃ kūtē̃ = kuttē nē.

Similarly the same postpositions may be affixed to the plural endings as in the diagram, and so with other nouns, as kanājū, grain, (m.) bagelī, eight-anna bit (f.), bāṇ, sister (f.) Sing. bāṇā (obl.) bāṇē̃ (ag.) Pl. bāṇā̃ (nom.) bāṇē̃ (obl.) bāṇē̃ orō̃ (ag.).

Adjectives.

	Masculine.		Feminine.		
	Singular.	*Plural.*	*Singular.*	*Plural.*	
Nom.	bhaiṛā	bhaiṛe	bhaiṛī	bhaiṛīā̃	= Panjābī bhaiṛā.
Obl.	bhaiṛe	bhaiṛē̃	bhaiṛīā	bhaiṛīē̃	

Adjectives ending in a consonant are indeclinable.

Pronouns, Personal, First Person.

	Singular.			*Plural.*		
	Sā̃sī.	Panjābī.	Urdū.	Sā̃sī.	Panjābī.	Urdū.
N.	haū̃	maĩ	maĩ	ham	asī	ham
G.	mērā	mērā	mērā	mhārā	sāḍā	hamārā
D. Ac.	manū̃	mainū̃	mujh kō	ham kō	sānū̃	ham kō
Ab.	mēsthē	mērē tē, &c.	mujh sē	ham thō	sāthō̃, &c.	ham sē
Ag.	maĩ	maĩ	maĩ nē	hamō̃	asā̃	ham ne

Second Person.

	Singular.			*Plural.*		
	Sā̃sī.	Panjābī.	Urdū.	Sā̃sī.	Panjābī.	Urdū.
N.	taū̃	tū̃	tū	tam	tusī	tum
G.	tērā	tērā	tērā	tuārā	tuhāḍā	tumhārā
D. Ac.	tanū̃	tainū̃, &c.	tujh kō	tumkō	tuhānū̃	tumkō
Ab.	tēsthē	tērētē, &c.	tujh sē	tamthō	tuhāthō̃, &c.	tumsē
Ag.	taĩ	tū̃, taĩ	tū nē	tamō̃	tusā̃	tum nē

Third Person.

	Singular.		*Plural.*	
	Sā̃sī.	Urdū.	Sā̃sī.	Urdū.
N. ...	ĕā	yih	ē	yih
	uh	wuh	uh	wuh
G. ...	iskā	iskā	inkā	inkā
	uskā	uskā	unkā	unkā
Ag. ...	in	isnē	inō̃	inhō̃ nē
	un	usnē	unō̃	unhō̃ nē

INTERROGATIVE.

	Singular.		*Plural.*	
	Sā̃sī.	Panjābī.	Sā̃sī.	Panjābī.
N.	kihṛā	kihṛā, kauṇ	kihṛē	kihṛē, kauṇ
G.	kiskā	kīdā, kisdā	kinkā	kinā̃ dā
Ag.	kin	kis	kinō̃	kinā̃, kinā̃ nē

Sā̃sī has a peculiar pronoun, tiārgā, without a parallel in Panjābī or Urdū. It means 'the thing or subject under discussion,' and is used to prevent a stranger's knowing what is being talked. It has a number of significations and quite baffles the uninitiated.

It should be noted that while in Urdū we have three 2nd Pers. Pronouns used in addressing a single person—tū, tum, āp—and in Panjābī two—tū̃ tusī̃,—in Sā̃sī there is only one—taū̃. I have always been addressed by Sā̃sīs in the 2nd Sing. Of course in speaking Urdū and Panjābī they conform to the usages of those languages.

VERB, Auxiliary, Present Tense.

	Singular.			*Plural.*		
	First.	Second.	Third.	First.	Second.	Third.
Sā̃sī	haī̃	haī̃	hai	hā̃	hō	haī̃
Urdū	hū̃	hai	hai	haī̃	hō	haī̃.

Past.

	Singular.		*Plural.*	
	Masculine.	Feminine.	Masculine.	Feminine.
Sā̃sī	sīyyā̃	siyyī	sīyyē	sīyyīā̃
Panjābī	sā, sī	sī	sē, san	san, sīā̃.

Dūtnā, eat (criminal) dūt-tā, dūtiā,

Aorist. Dūt —ē̃ —ē̃ —ē —ā̃ —ō —ē.

Future. —aŋgṛī —aŋgṛā —agṛā —ā̃gṛē —agṛē —aŋgṛē [Fem. aŋgṛī, &c., ā̃gṛīā̃, &c.]

Imperf. dūt, dutīē̃ (polite); plur. dūtō.

Cond. Past. dūttā (fem. dūttī) dūttē (fem. dūt tīā̃).

Prest. dūt-tā̃ haī̃ (fem. —tī̃ haī̃, &c , plur. dūt —tē hā̃, &c.

Imperf. —tā̃ sīyyā̃, &c.

Past. dūt-iā̃ (fem. —ī̃), plur. —e (fem. —īā̃).

Similarly hōṇā, hōtā, hūwwā, fut. hō̃gṛā.

jāṇā jattā, gayā (gēāwā) jā̃gṛā.

Passive. Similar to Panjābī haū̃ māriā jā̃gṛā (fem. mārī jā̃gṛī) = I shall be killed.

The Panjābī passive form is also found. Kahīdā hai = ākhīdā hai = it is said. When the root of a verb is prefixed to another verb, the root usually adds —ī, *e.g.*, marī jattā = marjātā, kūlī nhoḍaŋgṛā (criminal) = Panj. karchaḍā̃gā = I shall finish off.

ADVERBS, call for little notice.

ēṭhī = Panj. iththē, here; ōṭhī = ōththē, there; kaṛē = kiththē, where? jaṛē = jiththē, where; īdā = isṭarah, thus; ēṭhō̃ = iththō̃, hence; ōṭhō̃ = ōththō̃, thence; ēṭhō̃ tīkar = iththō̃ tīkar, thus far; nū̃ = udhar, thither; bhaḷak = bhaḷkē, to-morrow.

Bhī = phir, then, a second time, is very characteristic of Sā̃sī. It is so constantly used and is so gutturally enunciated that Panjābīs sneeringly employ 'bhī bhī karnā' or 'bhī bhī rē rē karnā' to signify the talking of a Sā̃sī, thus they will say "what were you doing among those who say 'bhī bhī rē rē?'" meaning "What business had you among the Sā̃sīs?"

āŋē̃ = hā̃, yes; iwwiyō or īwkē = now, quickly.

PREPOSITIONS, generally as in Panjābī.

gharā gē aggē = ghar dē aggē, before the house.

The Urdū sē, from, is thō̃; but when sē is used in comparison of adjectives, &c., it becomes saththā in Sā̃sī, *e.g.*, sāṛē̃ saththā bhaiṛā = sab se kharāb.

INTERJECTIONS.

The most noticeable is 'duhāī re!' or criminally 'duhāṇgī re!' to express surprise or horror. The common word for salām is duā hōtī (du'ā hōtī).

Criminal Variation.

This is a thought out and deliberate attempt of surpassing interest to disguise the ordinary dialect. Sā̃sīs call it Fārsī, Persian, and many really believe that it is connected with Persian. Of course this is erroneous. One of the chief difficulties in deciphering (so to speak) the Sā̃sī dialect is the existence of these two varieties side by side. The criminal variety is marked by two distinct features, (1) a number of words not found in the other, (2) a series of semi-systematic changes of already existing words. These changes vary, the same word being sometimes changed, sometimes unchanged, sometimes changed in one way, sometimes changed in another.

Subjoined is a list of the principal changes.

s changed to n, nāb = sāb (sāhib); nāt = sāt, seven.

s ,, nh, nhārā = sārā, all.

p changed to n, nūchnā = pūchnā, ask; naisā = paisā.
ph „ nh, nhiṭṭā = phiṭṭā (abuse).
bh „ nh, nhī = bhī = phir, then, &c.
bh „ ch, Chattū = Bhattū = a Sāsī; chatānī = bhatānī, woman.
bh „ jh, jhūkhā = bhūkhā, hungry.
b „ c, catānā = batānā, shew.
ch „ nh, nhōḍnā = chōḍnā = chōṛnā, leave.
n „ kh, khigalnā = nigalnā = nikalnā, emerge.
d „ kh, khas = das, ten.
l „ k, kōhnā = lōhnā, mārnā, *cf.* Kashmīrī lāyun.

Changes formed by additions of letters, sometimes with vowel change.

b prefixed to vowels, bek = ek, bun = un, bĕā = ĕā, beṭhī = eṭhī.
k „ „ kōdmī = ādmī, man; kōṭh = āṭh, eight; kōdhā = ādhā, half; kundar = andar.
kh prefixed to consonants, kharājū = rājī = rāẓī, satisfied; khaḍīṭhā = dīṭhā = Panj. ḍiṭhṭha, Urdū dēkhā, seen.
ḍha „ „ ḍha bāṇ = bāṇ = bahin (Urdū) sister; ḍhagal = gala, neck.

Verbs whose roots end in a vowel have sometimes p inserted after the root:—

dēpnā = dēnā, give; lēpnā = lēnā, take; hōpnā = hōnā, be.

Verbs whose roots end in ah, change ah to aug.

Kaugnā, = kahnā, say; raugnā = rahnā, remain; ānā, come, and jānā, go, become asarnā and jasarnā, respectively.

jānā has two criminal past participles, one regular jasarnā, one gaugā, formed from gayā on the analogy of kaugnā, raugnā, &c.

g is added in mhārgā = mhārā = hamārā, our; tuārgā = tuārā = your; mērgā = mērā, my; tērgā = tērā, thy; kihṛgā = kihṛā, who? jihṛgā = jihṛā, who, *cf.* Pūnc dialect sāṛā, our; suāṛā, your; mhāṛā, my; tuāṛā, thy.

I have noticed occasionally peculiar double changes.

khadēpaŋṛā = dēpaŋṛā = dēŋṛā = dēũgā, I shall give; khajihṛgā = jihṛgā = jihṛā, who.

Special words:—It is almost impossible to distinguish between criminal and ordinary special words.

bōrā, boy	kajjā } jāṭ	bārmī, wife
bōrī, girl	khēṭ } jāṭ	kīnī, khatrī
bhautā, brother	gōliyā } cūhṛā	cawal, rascal
bāṇ, sister	nōkh } cūhṛā	bhūkal } dog
bhatānī, woman	baut, thief	kūtā } dog

ṭūnḍā, pig
lālsī, cow
khimaṭ, buffalo
chābrā, he-goat
laudā, ox
kūdrā, horse
ṭīmī, food
khīsū, corn
caī, water
ṭaslī, bread, food
cīpṛā, piece of cloth
dhūlā, = guṛ, coarse-sugar
khaulā, house
nād, village
pirl, oil
sarband, arrangement
lāllī, night, cf. Arabic lail

lābā, baluā, khupnā }, rupee
khāṭ, bed
baī = bāt, matter
raiŋk, meat
kōnnā, one anna
dhormī, two anna bit
chauglī, four ,, ,,
bagēlī, eight ,, ,,
gulūbā, tobacco
buṛknā, ṭōgnā }, huqqa
paunī, shoe
bindī, ear-drop
gēḍī, Panj. jhamnī
reṭnā, lose

ḍīmnā, dūtnā }, eat
gumāna = hide *cf.* Persian gum
nunjnā, sleep
ṭhauŋknā, sit
khīmnā, weep
lōhnā, beat, cf. Kashmīrī lāyun
ṭōgnā, drink
beī, gum, naththī }, kūlnā, cup karnā, keep quiet
kūlnā, do
lugnā, die
&c., &c.

I close with a rather free rendering of the parable of the Prodigal Son in Criminal Sā̃sī, a strange combination truly. I have written below the lines a literal translation into Urdū.

"Bēk kōdmī sīyyā, buskē dhōr bōrē sīyyē, khīkā bōrā
ek ādmī thā (sī) uskē dō laṛkē the, chōṭā (nikkā) laṛkā

apnē ḍhabap tē̃ kaugnē laggā bhaī jihṛgā kundrā bic hōpē buskā
apnē bāp sē kahnē lagā ki . jō andar mē̃ hai uskā

kōdhā hissa manū̃ dēp. Bun kaugiā lēpīlēp, bhī bun lēpī
ādhā ḥiṣṣa mujhkō dē. Usnē kahā lēlē, phir usnē lē

liyyā. Nhī buh ṭurī gaugā tē nhārē baluē nhārē naisē
liyā. Phir wuh calā (ṭur) gayā aur sārē rupaiē sārē paisē

nharāb kūlī nhōḍē. Nhī baṛā jhūkhā khatang hōpiā. Buskē
kharāb kar chōṛē. Phir baṛā bhūkhā tang huā. Uske

nās kuch nahī̃ raugiā; nhī buh ṭūnḍē̃ gā khanaukar hōpī
pās kuch nahī̃ rahā; phir wuh sūarō̃ kā naukar hō

gaugā, par jhūkhā lugī gaugā. Tā̃ apnē khadilā bic nhōciā
gayā, par bhūkhā mar gayā. Tab apnē dil mē̃ sōcā

mērgē ḍhabaptē̃ nās kitnē khanaukar hōpē tē buh dūtiā kūltē;
mērē bāp-kē pās kitne naukar haī̃ aur wuh khāyā kartē;

tē manū̃ nahī̃ khadēpagṛā? Haū̃ buskē nās ṭurī jasraŋṛā.
aur mujhkō nahī̃ dēgā? Maī̃ uskē pās calā jāū̃gā.

Jad buh kha ṭurī gaugā buskē khabap tē̃ buskō naukhiā tē
Jab wuh calā gayā uskē bāp nē uskō dēkhā aur

baṛā khīmiā tē buskō ḍhagal lāī lēpiā: buskē nāstē baṛīā̃
baṛā rōyā aur uskō galē lagā liyā: uskē wāsṭē baṛī

nhoṇiā̃ nhoṇiā̃ pushākā̃ lēasriā̃ tē buskē nāstē raiŋk kūli dēpiā.
sōhnī sōhnī poshākā̃ lēāē aur uskē wāsṭē gōsht kar diyā.

Buskā ḍhabaṛā bōrā naṛī ṭawiā; bun kaugiā haũ tērgē nās
Uska baṛā laṛkā saṛ paṛā; usnē kahā maĩ tērē pās

khrōj raugtā riā, taĩ manũ kuch nahĩ dēpiā. Ḍhabap tē
rōz rahtā rahā, tūnē mujhkō kuch nahĩ diyā. Bāp né

kaugiā khajihṛgē mērgē hōpaĩ balūē naisē tērgē hōpaĩ; khīkā
kahā jō mērē haĩ rupaiē paisē tērē haĩ; chōṭā

bōrā lugī gaugā sīyyā, bīwkē khajī wī ṭawiā, gawācī
laṛkā mar gayā thā, ab jī bhī paṛā, khō (gawāc)

gaugā sīyyā bīwkē khalabī ṭawiā.
gayā thā ab mil (labh) paṛā.